

DEPARTMENTAL WORKERS

Interesting Gossip Gleaned Among Employees of Government Bureaus.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN PREPARATION

Prof. Holmes, Head Curator of Anthropology at National Museum, Getting Ready for Several Important Researches--Mr. Bates Not Yet Back.

Prof. William H. Holmes, head curator in the department of anthropology in the National Museum, has returned from an extended trip throughout the Western States. He has been preparing the way for some archaeological work which he intends to do in the West. Prof. Holmes has a party employed in Kentucky in the interest of archaeology. There are some ancient flint mines in this State which the professor intends to investigate. He has another party occupied in Arizona in the work of excavating in a sulphur spring. Last year in the vicinity of this spring an important find was made in a similar spring. The find consisted in about eight hundred Indian implements which, as has been ascertained, were thrown into the spring as sacrifices to the deities which were supposed to inhabit it. It is expected that the spring upon which Prof. Holmes is working will produce a similar find.

Prof. Holmes also visited the spot at which the famous Lansing skeleton was found, near the Kansas penitentiary. The fossil was discovered by workmen who were excavating a cellar. It is supposed to be that of a very ancient man. It belongs, according to Prof. Holmes, to the same family as the American Indian. "The remains," says the professor, "were so associated with the geological formations as to indicate very great age for the race to which they belong. The geologists are now at work attempting to determine the exact age of the formations, but it is expected that nothing very definite will result until careful excavations are made. It is hoped thus to learn whether the body could have been introduced in later times. It is clear that if such is not the case we have here the oldest trace of human occupation on the American continent, unless the California evidences should turn out to be genuine." Prof. Holmes made diagrams and drawings of the place where the skeleton was found and measurements and sketches of the skull.

Prof. Holmes has been connected with Government service since 1872, having entered it as assistant in the United States Geological Survey; from 1880 to 1889 he was geologist in the same survey. Subsequently he was appointed curator in the department of aboriginal pottery in the National Museum, then archaeologist in the Bureau of Ethnology, in charge of explorations, and finally he accepted the position which he now holds. He is a native of Ohio, a graduate of the McNeely Normal School, and was afterward a normal school teacher. He has written extensively on ethnology, on archaeology, especially relative to the prehistoric, and on the ceramic and textile arts. His article entitled "Stone Implements of the Potomac-Chesapeake Tidewater Province" received the Loubet quinquennial prize of \$1,000.

Mr. C. A. Bates, chief of the assessment division of the Internal Revenue Office, has not, as yet, returned to his duties at the Treasury. Some time in August, his son, Dr. Bates, very mysteriously disappeared in New York, and Mr. Bates at that time left his post in the Treasury Department to take up the search. Dr. Bates has, as yet, not been found.

Mr. Arthur E. Middleton, of the office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, has moved into the city from Washington Grove, where he and his family have been spending the summer. Mr. Middleton is known in musical circles as a basso of rare ability.

The Government Printing Office has lost one of its oldest employees in the person of Capt. W. H. Murphy, assistant to the paymaster of that department. Mr. Murphy died very suddenly Sunday morning, having been at his post on Friday. He had been employed in the department since about the year 1867, having come in under Mr. A. M. Clapp, Congressional Printer at the time. Mr. Murphy had served in the Printing Office ever since, and was very well known. He served in the Third United States Artillery. He was a resident of the District.

The Government Printing Office council of the National Union is preparing for a very large euchre party, to be given in Convention Hall. The council expects to make it the largest affair of the kind ever held in Washington. Arrangements will be made for seating 2,500 people. The features of the euchre will be an orchestra of thirty pieces which will furnish entertainment, while the people are being seated, and a brigade of ladies in white costumes, who will punch tickets. The largest euchre ever held here seated 1,000.

Mr. Richard McGrath, head gardener at the Treasury Department, has made very elaborate decorations in a floral way in the garden at the north of the Treasury grounds. He has four figures composed of alternations and colors which represent as many corps badges. Earlier in the year the Grand Army of the Republic requested the Secretary of the Treasury to make these badges, and the beautiful designs made by Mr. McGrath are the outcome of that request. In the northwest corner of the grounds is the emblem of the Sixth Corps. The design is a cross. Next to this, and perhaps the most beautiful of the four is the badge of the Seventeenth Corps. The arrow of the design is in red, the groundwork is a deep green, while just inside the border is a sparse array of colesus. Mr. McGrath has been congratulated on the success he has had with his colesus, as it was doubted whether this plant would grow in weather as cool as the present. The next design is the Maltese cross, a very pretty piece of work, representing the emblem of the Fifth Corps. In the

THE PLAYER FOLK

This is the last season of the Primrose and Dockstader minstrels. Next year each member of the firm of minstrels will be the head of his own company.

Mr. Primrose will direct his own enterprise, while Klaw & Erlanger will look after the business affairs of the Dockstader venture.

This will not be Dockstader's first attempt to go it alone in the minstrel world, for as long ago as 1890 Dockstader's minstrels under the direction of Harry Clapham toured the country with a good deal of artistic success, even if the money did not roll into the box office in large enough quantities to make the company an out and out success.

Dockstader kept pegging away industriously for several seasons, and then gave up the work in disgust and went into vaudeville, where he regained his lost fortune. Dockstader has always been ranked high up in his profession as a performer, even if his management has not always been of the best.

George Primrose will no doubt feel a bit lonesome as he goes around the country next year with his merry minstrels, for it will be the first time in his rather extensive career that he has not had one or more partners to share his successes, for it should be remembered that Primrose has never yet known anything but success in the minstrel business.

Back in 1873, the Haverly minstrels contained four very promising performers. They were Milt Barlow, George Wilson, Billy West and George Primrose, or "Prim" as he was commonly known. Minstrelsy, like every other feature of the theatrical business, was not so well developed then as it is today. The companies "trouped" from town to town, renting the local op'ry houses or halls in such places that did not boast of a temple of Theatres.

The Haverly organization did not have a regular treasurer, and in the evening during the "first part," it was part of Primrose's duties to stand on the door, jingle seven or eight silver dollars in his hand just to show that he was with the troupe, and watch the people pass in to see the performance, the while keeping a sharp lookout that Mr. Haverly was not imposed upon and that he got every cent that was coming to him.

In many instances, "Prim" was called upon to take his turn in the box office and sell tickets, especially in towns where the company rented the only available place to give its show. In this manner the young dancer--for at that time Primrose was a clog dancer and nobody ever thought of his occupying one of the positions of prominence on the ends, either banging the tambourine or shaking the bones--obtained an early business training that has stood him in good stead in later life.

During the 1873 tour of the Haverly minstrels--and that season Charles Frohman was with the company in the capacity of advance agent--Barlow, Wilson, Primrose, and West, got the idea into their heads that it would be a fine thing to start a minstrel show of their own, and following the custom of minstrel performers, the quartet had cards printed, showing the heads of the four, and containing the words, "Barlow, Wilson, Primrose, and West's Minstrels."

These cards were liberally distributed in every theater in which the Haverly company played that year, and toward the end of the season, Col. "Jack" Haverly came to Primrose and said:

"Prim, want a good agent next year?"

"I don't know, whom have you got in mind?"

"Myself," answered the colonel, "you boys are sure to make a go of it and I want to be with you."

However, Jack Haverly was not with the show when it commenced its career at Wilmington, Del., August 20, 1874.

The first Barlow, Wilson, Primrose, and West company was distinctly a dancing show.

The organization contained such nimble-footed gentlemen as Primrose and West, John Doyle, Frank McNish, Fox and Ward, Jimmy Mackin, and Barney Fagan.

McNish soon graduated from the dancing class and established himself in popular favor by his "Silence and Fun" specialty, which was one of the earliest departures from the old-time acrobatic turns. McNish prospered surprisingly for several years, but he was limited so much that his style of performance soon fell into the commonplace.

Barney Fagan is still dancing, and is at present playing the music halls of England with Henrietta Byron.

Jimmy Mackin later came into prominence as the dancing partner of Francis Wilson, the comic opera comedian, and the team of Mackin and Wilson was counted among the best in the business for many years, until Wilson commenced to read books and aspire to something better than the minstrel field offered.

The Barlow, Wilson, Primrose and West show lasted four years, when Barlow and Wilson started a show of their own and Primrose and West joined forces with George Thatcher, and then the organization known as Thatcher, Primrose and West prospered for a while.

The Barlow and Wilson show lasted but a single season. Barlow persisted in clinging to his old-time darky specialty and George Wilson refrained from freshening up his "Wait Me Again" act, and in consequence they did not do the business they expected.

The Thatcher, Primrose and West organization was in existence seven years, when Thatcher left to start his "Tuxedo" company, which proved an expensive one, as it practically cost him the better part of his fortune.

George Wilson started a company of burnt cork entertainers of his own, but his success was not sufficient to encourage him to keep the organization moving for more than a season.

Then George Primrose and "Billy" West became partners, and about this time West blossomed forth as an interlocutor with more frills to his work than any man who had ever before occupied the center of the semi-circle. It was worth the price of admission to see the suave West indulge in made-to-order repartee with the gentlemen on the ends, and at the conclusion of the jokes announce that "Mr. Harry Leighton, the world's sweetest tenor, will now favor us with an original selection."

Many a time has the audience wished Mr. Leighton would retire and give Mr. West another chance to repeat his announcement.

"Billy" West and George Primrose were business partners for seven years more, and during this period celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary in the minstrel field by giving a monster performance at the Madison Square Garden in 1898.

When the two men dissolved business relations West started off on his own hook, while Primrose associated himself with Dockstader. The opposing organizations ran across each other every once in a while and the battles that ensued were about as picturesque as anything that has ever enlivened the theatrical profession. The most important of these engagements occurred at Buffalo, when the city was literally plastered all over with the flaming announcements of the two black-face shows.

During this intense business rivalry Primrose and West remained fast friends, and when the latter died in Chicago, at the Palmer House, last spring, Primrose hurried to New York to receive the remains and acted as one of the pallbearers, and of the whole concourse of mourners there was none so affected as Primrose over the loss of his side partner of twenty-seven years.

During the period that George Primrose has been prominent in the amusement field numerous opposition minstrels have sprung up and, after a brief existence, withered by the wayside, after ineffectual attempts to share some of the success that came to the one-time Haverly dancer.

Among these companies were the Duprez and Benedict show, Hooley and Emerson, the latter being Billy Emerson, who is now doing stunts in vaudeville; Nell Bryant's, a show that contained some of the best dancers of the States and did not seek glory farther West than the Ohio River; "Emerson and the Big Four," the big four including Smith, Waldron, Martin, and Cronin, and counted one of the strongest collections of minstrels of the time; McNish, Slavin and Jones--Frank McNish, the "silence and fun" man; Bob Slavin, now dead, and Carroll Johnson, who is still singing Irish songs and "Could I Only Pick the Winner" in the vaudeville theaters; Rice, Sweatman and Fagan--the late Billy Rice, a funny, fat comedian with a wonderfully humorous pair of eyes, Willis Sweatman, now in vaudeville, and Barney Fagan, the dancer; the W. S. Cleveland show, headed by one of Primrose and West's former employees, and at one time among the strongest minstrel organizations on the road.

Cleveland had an opportunity to put almost every other show out of business, but one day he heard somebody say that Caesar had been ambitious, and he, too, wanted to have the same thing said of him, with the result that he started out three troupes one season, and soon heard a dull thud in the vicinity of his exchequer, and ever since the ambitious Mr. Cleveland has been wondering what it was that struck him.

The minstrels have had a hard time of it during the past twenty years or so, for their ranks have been depleted by the vaudeville and comic opera managers, and some of their brightest members have deserted the box of burnt cork for the stirk of grease paint.

The old-time minstrel afterpieces have been elaborated into three-act affairs, and labeled "farce comedies," the familiar tricks of black-faced shows of years ago have been appropriated by the farce writers, and no less prominent a dramatist than Charles Hoyt went to the minstrel field whenever he wanted anything particularly effective in the laugh-creating line.

And yet this type of stage entertainment is as popular, if not more so, today than ever before, and there is no evidence that the interest of the public is on the wane.

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Government Blankets, 25 Cents.

Leather horse collars, \$1.25; roofing paper, 75c; combine pipe, \$1.25; McCalland saddle, \$4.50; oil cloth for wagons, new, 30c a yard. S. Benninger & Co., 11th and B sts.

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Big Trust in Naval Stores Organizing

Seven Southern Companies to Form Combine.

SAVANNAH, Sept. 30.—The greatest change ever known in the naval stores business is about to be consummated. A new \$2,000,000 corporation will soon be perfected, and will take over the business of seven houses, which will lose their identity and be merged into the new company, which will be the greatest naval stores company in the world, having the largest capitalization and doing the greatest volume of business.

Those to go into the combine are: Southern Naval Stores Company, of Savannah; the Ellis Young Company, of Savannah; the Downing Company, of Brunswick; The Mutual Naval Stores Company, of Jacksonville; The Florida Naval Stores and Commission Company, of Jacksonville; The Gulf Naval Stores Company, of Tampa, Carabeller and Pensacola; the West Coast Naval Stores Company, of Pensacola.

These seven companies handle the output of over 500 naval stores producers of Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi. Altogether their business exceeds during a year 275,000 casks of spirits of turpentine and 120,000 barrels of rosin, or an annual volume of \$11,000,000. On Wednesday a meeting will be held at Jacksonville, at which the articles of incorporation for the new company will be finally adopted. Lawyers have been at work on them and all the companies will be represented at the meeting by their chief officers.

On Thursday the advertising of the articles of incorporation will probably begin. It is proposed that the new company, which will begin work under the title of Consolidated Naval Stores Company, shall begin business on the 1st of next January. In the meantime the several companies which become part of it will, it is understood, go into voluntary liquidation so that their business will be entirely closed up by the close of the year.

EMPEROR TO RECEIVE BOERS.

BERLIN, Sept. 30.—Emperor William has decided to receive Generals Botha, Delarey, and DeWet, the Boer commanders. They are making a week's visit in this city.

MR. WYNNE FAVORS THE RETURN CARD

First Assistant Postmaster General Discusses It.

First Assistant Postmaster General Wynne, who has just returned from a month's vacation on the coast of Maine, is a believer in the return c. o. d. postal card idea. Speaking on this subject yesterday, Mr. Wynne said:

"Advertisers who desire to do a postal card business on a large scale are deterred therefrom by the waste now involved. It is estimated that only about 10 per cent of stamped postal cards and envelopes are returned to senders. An expenditure of 100 per cent in postage for such a small return naturally operates against an extensive use of the mails for such purposes.

"I would use the mails for legitimate advertising purposes if required only to pay postage on the cards and envelopes actually returned to them. If, under proper safeguards, the mail service can be made to pay the postage on the cards, the public need the department should meet the demand. Estimates submitted to the commission that recently investigated the subject show that for the proposed service many millions of dollars would be added to the first-class postal revenues. These estimates range from a minimum of \$5,000,000 upward.

"No private interests could be invaded, and the legitimate increase of the postal service from any source would be both useful and gratifying. But to make the experiment a success business must be sought, and experience alone can furnish such stimulus with safety to the Government and to the postal revenues.

"To be in part performed by private enterprise, answer is made that the mail service is dependent upon private assistance and cannot be performed without such aid. The department owns practically only the mailbags and locks. For transportation purposes the railroads, steamboats, stage coaches, street cars, mail transportation wagons, and all other mail transportation methods are owned, controlled, and operated by private individuals or corporations. There is nothing novel or new in the proposition to engage the assistance of private enterprise for the betterment of the postal service.

"The need of some such return postage system is conceded, and the duty of the department is to meet that need. The waste, estimated at about 90 per cent, which prevents a greatly increased use of the mails, should be obviated if possible. One of the feasible plans offered should promptly be inaugurated to test its success or failure."

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